

xiv. 385 Illumination of the intellect, together with charity inflaming the heart, constitute the gift of wisdom.

b. personified (almost always as feminine).

c. 888 *ÆLFRED Boeth.* iii. §1 *ba com þær gan in to me heofocund Wisdom.* c. 1000 *Ag. Gosp. Matt.* xi. 19 *Wisdom ys gerithwisud fram heora bearnum.* 1362 *LANGL. P. Pl. A. IV.* 87 *He hab wæget me a-mendes wisdom him tauhte.* 1535 *COVERDALE Prov.* xiii. 1 *Doth not wydom crief doth not vnderstandinge put forth hir voyce?* 1597 *HOOKER Eccl. Pol. v.* viii. §1 *To prescribe the order of doing . . . is a peculiar prerogative which Wisedome hath, as Queene or soueraigne commandresse ouer other vertues.* 1611 *Bible Transl. Pref. ¶4* *Loue the Scriptures, and wisdome will loue thee.* 1742 *GRAY Adversity* 25 *Wisdom in sable garb array'd Immers'd in rapt'rous thought profound.* 1784 *COWPER Task* vi. 97 *Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much, Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.* 1802 *WORDSW. 'I grieved for Buonaparte'* 9 *Wisdom doth live with children round her knees.* 1850 *TENNYSON In Mem.* cxiv. 22 *For she [sc. Knowledge] is earthly of the mind, But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.*

c. as one of the manifestations of the divine nature in Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Cor. i. 24, 30, etc.); hence used as a title of the second person of the Trinity (*the Wisdom of the Father*); also occas. applied to God or the Trinity.

c. 888 *ÆLFRED Boeth.* xli. §4 *Se wisdom mæg us callunga ongan swylce swylce we sint . . . forðæn se wisdom is God.* a. 1175 *Cott. Hom.* 219 *þurh his wisdom (se sune) heo 3e-worhte alle þing.* c. 1200 *Vices & Virtues* 25 *De sune of 6e fader skenned al swa his wisdom.* a. 1225 *Anst. R.* 26 *Almiht God, Feder, & Sune, & soðest Holl Gost, also 3e preo beoð o God, & o mihte, o wisdom, & o lue.* c. 1300 *Cursor M.* 9730. 1404 *Jacks Upland in Pol. Poems* (Rolls) 11. 36 *Christ, that is the wisdome of God the Father.* 1587 *GOLDING De Mornay* v. (1592) §3 *We call him also the wisdome of the Father, yea, and euen meere and simply wisdome.* 1833 *NEWMAN Ariens* ii. iii. (1876) 160 *It would appear that our Lord is called the Word or Wisdom in two respects; first, to denote His essential presence in the Father . . . secondly, His mediatorship.* 1855 *LYNCH Lett. to Scattered* ii. (1872) 32 *Wisdom is alive: it is not a thing or quality. It is God. It is God and Man, for it is Christ.*

d. Contextually, usually predicative with following inf.: = a wise thing to do; also with *a* and *pl.*, a piece of wisdom; a wise action or proceeding. (Opp. to *FOLLY* sb.¹ c.) *arch.*

1362 *LANGL. P. Pl. A. VII.* 201 *Here nou . . . holde hit for wisdom.* c. 1400 *Hoccleve Min. Poems* xxiv. 215 *Is it wysdam as þat it seemeth yow, Were it on your fynge continually?* 1482 *Cely Papers* (Camden) 87 *Hyt wybbe whyzdom to be sewy of mo.* 1593 *SHAKS. 3 Hen. VI.* iv. vii. 60 *Till then, 'tis wisdom to conceale our meaning.* a. 1628 *F. GREYIL Sidney* (1652) 2 *Had I grounded my ends upon active Wisdomes of the present.* 1764 *PRIESTLEY Lect. Hist., Edu. (1788)* p. xv. *It is certainly our wisdom to contrive that the studies of youth should tend to fit them for the business of manhood.* 1831 *SCOTT Ct. Rob.* xviii. *It is wisdom to choose a better protector.* 1884 *HELEN JACKSON Ramona* i. *If she had ever said anything about herself, which she never did—one of her many wisdoms.*

e. (*a*) *pl.* as attribute of a number of persons; hence, with possessive, as a title of dignity or respect, esp. for the members of a deliberative assembly; also jocularly or ironically. Similarly, without possessive, as in *the best wisdoms* = the wisest men.

1432 *Rolls of Parlt. IV.* 403/2 *To the right wyse and discrete Commens of this present Parliament . . . Please hit unto your worthy and noble wisdoms and discretions [etc.].* 1447-8 *Shillingford's Lett.* (Camden) 108 *As hit appereth of record that the whiche they remyte to your wysedoms.* 1536 *CROMWELL in Merriman Life & Lett.* (1902) 11. 2 *As by your wisdomes ye shall thinke may best serue for the kinges highnes purpose.* 1587 *D. Fawcett's Hist. Ministers* 60 *It may please their wisdomes, who are to be leude that to consider.* 1619 *J. DENISON Heav. Banquet* c. 317. *I will leude that to their wisdomes who haue place of government.* 1631 *MARKHAM Country Content.* i. xix. (ed. 4) 103 *Many of the best wisdomes of our Nation.* 1794 *WOLCOT (P. Pindar) Ode to Tyrants Wks.* 1812 III. 253 *Euen Folly . . . freely on your Wisdoms cracks her jokes.*

(b) Less commonly in *sing.* of a single person. 1447-8 *Shillingford's Lett.* (Camden) 42 *Not likely by that mene to be ended lightly, as your wysedom knowyth well.* 1598 *HAKLUYTT Voy. Ep. Ded. ¶3* *The chiefe motives which induced his princely wisdome hereunto.* 1612 *J. COTTA Disc. Dang. Pract. Phys.* i. ix. 72 *The parents . . . sent for a wisewoman, & her wisdome came vnto them.* a. 1652 *A. WILSON in Peck Desid. Curiosa* (1715) II. xii. 24 *The Maior's Wisdom said, hee knew not my Lord's Hand.* 1831 *SCOTT Ct. Rob.* xiii. *Can your wisdom possibly entertain a wish to converse with me?*

f. *Phr. in his (or its, etc.) wisdom:* now usually ironic.

1862 *QUEEN VICTORIA in Hansard CXXXIII.* 20 *To enable the Industry of the Country to meet successfully that unrestricted Competition to which Parliament, in its Wisdom, has decided that it should be subjected.* 1863 *N. HAWTHORNE Our Old Home* 307 *Possibly his Lordship thought, in his wisdom, that the good feeling which was sure to be expressed by a company of well-bred Englishmen, at his august and far-famed dinner table, might have an appreciable influence on the grand result.* 1930 *W. FAULKNER As I Lay Dying* 68 *If you have no son, it's because the Lord has decreed otherwise in His wisdom.* 1974 *K. CLARK Another Part of Wood* vi. 232 *In the 1930's, when the country was at least ten times as rich as it is today, the Treasury 'in its wisdom' twice found it necessary to cut off our annual purchase grant altogether.*

2. a. Knowledge (esp. of a high or abstruse kind); enlightenment, learning, erudition; in early use often = philosophy, science. †Also, practical knowledge or understanding, expertness in an art. Now only *Hist.*

c. 950 *Lindisf. Gosp. Luke* xi. 52 *Tulistis clauem scientie, gie homon . . . ego wisdomes.* 1382 *WYCLIF 1 Cor.* ii. 13 *Not in teygt wordis of mannis wisdom, but in doctryne of the spirit.* c. 1386 *CHAUCER Prolog.* 575 *The wisdom of an heepe of lerned men.* *Of maistres hadde he mo than thries ten.* 1460-70 *Bk. Quinte Essence* i. *be wijsdom and pe science of his booke schuldre . . . preserued.* 1526 *TINDALE Acts* vii. 22 *Moses was learned in all maner of wisdom and of the Egipcians.* 1557 *in Lodge Illustr. Brit. Hist.* (1791) I. 276 *The Queene's Ma'ty, knowing the wysdome and skyll of John Brende, Esquier, in the leading and ordering of footemen.* 1662 *J. CHANDLER Van Helmont's Oriat.* 163 *This . . . was Zoosophie or the wisdom of keeping living Creatures together.* 1770 *LANGHORNE Plutarch* (1879) I. 130/1 *What was then called wisdom, which consisted in a knowledge of the arts of government, and the practical part of political prudence.* 1875 *LIGHTFOOT Comm. Coloss.* 90 *'Wisdom' in Gnostic teaching was the exclusive possession of the few.*

b. *pl.* Kinds of learning, branches of knowledge. *rare.*

c. 888 *ÆLFRED Boeth.* vii. §3 *Mine peowas sindon wisdomas & craftas & soðe welan.* a. 1300 *Cursor M.* 8482 *Of all wisdoms [Solomon] had i-nogh.* 1853 *F. W. FABER All for Jesus* (1854) 130 *The Corinthians could not come near us in the variety of our wisdoms and our gifts.*

c. In renderings of med. L. names of substances prepared or used by the alchemists, as *lute of wisdom* (see *LUTE* sb.¹ 1), *salt of wisdom* = *ALEMBOOTH*.

(Cf. *PHILOSOPHER* 4, 5 b, *PHILOSOPHICAL* 4.) 1460-70 [see *LUTE* sb.¹ 1]. 1576 *BAKER Gerner's Jewell of Health* 37 *The Lute of Wysewdom, which resisteth the fire marvellously.* 1800 *tr. Lagrange's Chem.* II. 23 *Alembroth, Salt of the Art, Salt of Wisdom.*

3. a. Wise discourse or teaching; with *a* and *pl.*, a wise saying or precept. Now *rare* or *arch.*

c. 1175 *Lamb. Hom.* 125 *Imong þan muchela wisdoma þe ure drihten lerdre his apostles.* c. 1205 *LAY.* 25628 *Ælci þis wite wisdom sæiden.* c. 1250 *Gen. & Ex.* 462 *On two tables of tise and bras Wrot he þat wisdom.* 1303 *R. BRUNNE Handl. Synne* 179 *Anoper wisdoma a clerk vs telleþ.* c. 1400 *LYDO. Charles & Bird* 274 *Min. Poems* (Percy Soc.) 189 *To here a wisdom thyn eres been half deaf.* 1493 *[H. PARKER] Diues & Pauper* (1496) ix. iv. 350/2 *I shall teche the thre wysedomes whiche yf thou kepe them well they shall do the moche proufyte.* 1531 *ELYOT Gov.* iii. xxv. *In his fables the foxe, the hare, and the wolfe, though they neuer spoke, do teache many good wysedomes.* 1860 *SALA Badd. Peer.* I. vii. 127 *Listen then, to the wisdom of Pollybank.*

b. In the titles of two books of the Apocrypha, viz. *The Wisdom of Solomon* (often abbrev. *Wisdo-ri* or *The Book of Wisdom*), and *The Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach* (commonly called *Ecclesiasticus*). Cf. also *Wisdom literature*, etc. in 5.

1430-40 *Wycliffite Bible Wisd.* (heading) *Heer gynneþ the prolog in the booc of Wisdam.* 1611 *Bible* (title) *The Wisdome of Solomon.* *Ibid.* (title) *The Wisdome of Iesus the sonne of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus.* 1875 *PLUMPTRE in Expositor* I. 336 *Those [words] which are found in Philo and in the Epistles but not in Wisdom.* 1912 *E. C. SELWYN Oracles N.T.* iii. 78 *The fact that Wisdom also contains an anticipation of one of the three Temptations of Christ.*

†4. Sanity, 'reason'. (Cf. *WISE* a. 4.) *Obs. rare.* 1603 *SHAKS. Meas. for M.* iv. iv. 5 *Pray heauen his wisdome be not tainted.*

5. *Comb. a. attrib., as wisdom-book, -lecture, etc.; Wisdom literature*, a collective term for the biblical books of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom of Solomon, and Ecclesiasticus, and the Epistle of James; so *Wisdom books, poetry, versification*. (See also *WISDOM TOOTH*.) b. instrumental, objective, etc., as *wisdom-bred, -giving, -seasoned, -seeming, -working* adjs.

c. 1200 *Trin. Coll. Hom.* 187 *Of þe strengþe þe ure drihten us to munegeþ spect' wisdom boc and seið, Fortitudo simplici sapia domini.* 1887 *CHEYNE Job & Solomon* 180 *The Wisdom-books of the Old Testament proper.* 1832 *TENNYSON Enone* 121 *Power . . . 'wisdom-bred' And throned of wisdom.* 1667 *MILTON P. L.* ix. 679 *O Sacred, Wise, and 'Wisdom-giving Plant, Mother of Science.* a. 1644 *QUARLES Sol. Recent.* ch. xii. 9 *Because his true repentant soul was wise, He read this 'wisdom-lecture.* 1887 *CHEYNE Job & Solomon* 180 *The book now before us—the largest and most comprehensive in the 'Wisdom-literature.* 1809-10 *COLERIDGE Friend* (1818) III. 112 *The title of sophist, . . . 'wisdom-monger, in the same sense as we say, an iron-monger.* 1895 *R. G. MOULTON Proverbs* 169 *The metres of 'Wisdom poetry.* a. 1644 *QUARLES Sol. Recent.* Sol. xi. 1 *Thy 'wisdom-seasoned breast.* 1826 *E. J. BAYLY Babylon* I. ii. 74 *A 'wisdom-seeming ignorance.* 1816 *SHAKS. Sunst* 36 *To make hard hearts Dissolve away in 'wisdom-working grief.*

Hence 'wisdomful *a.*, full of wisdom; †'wisdomhood, wisdom; 'wisdomless *a.*, destitute of wisdom; †'wisdomness, (*a*) contained wisdom, wise signification or implication; (*b*) affected or spurious wisdom; 'wisdomship, (with possessive) as a title of (ironical) respect (cf. 1 c).

1845 *Blackw. Mag.* Feb. 156/2 *Its wondrous 'wisdomful speech.* 138 *WYCLIF Sel. Wks.* III. 99 *As Seynt Poul seip, In him beþ alle tresoures of kunnyng and of 'wisdomhud.* 1608 *MACHIN Dumb Knt.* iv. 1 *I am mad . . . all wit-stung.* 'wisdomlesse. 1589 *Marprel. Epit.* (1843) 21 *It is a hard matter . . . to conceale all the 'wisdomnesses of this syllogisme.* 1668 *E. KEMP Reas. Use Ch. Prayers in Publick* 14 *So impertinent a piece of gravity, so unreasonable a piece of wisdomness.* 1692 *Vindication Pref. A2.* *Their cool 'Wisdomships can be as Hot as their Neighbours in their own Concerns.*

wisdom ('wizdəm). Forms: 1- wisdom; 3 (Orm.) wissdom, (wistom), 3-5 wysdom, wisdam, 3-7 wisedom, wisdome, 4 wisdom, (wijsdam), 4-6 wysdome, (Sc. wisdome), 4-7 wisedome, 5 wisedam, wysdam(e), wysedom, (wijsdom, wysedomme, wisedom, vysdome, whysdom), 5-6 wysedome, (6 wissdome, -dum(e), wisz-, wyszdom, 7 Sc. wosdome). [OE. *wisdom* = OFris., OS. *wisdōm*, MDu. *wisdom*, OHG., MHG. *wistum* (G. *weistum* legal sentence, precedent), ON. *wissdmr* (Sw., Da. *wisdome*): see *WISE* a. and -DOM.] The quality or character of being wise, or something in which this is exhibited.

1. a. Capacity of judging rightly in matters relating to life and conduct; soundness of judgement in the choice of means and ends; sometimes, less strictly, sound sense, esp. in practical affairs: opp. to *folly*.

Beowulf 1959 *Offa wæs . . . wide gearweod, wisdom heold ebel sinne.* c. 1000 *Inst. Polity* ii. in Thorpe *Laws* II. 306 *Þurh cynynges wisdom folc wyrð gesæl, geundful, & sigefæst.* c. 1175 *Lamb. Hom.* 123 *þæt wit and þene wisdom þe ure drihten us sende.* c. 1200 *ORMIN* 8974 *Hire sune wex & þraf i wisdom & inn elde.* a. 1225 *Anst. R.* 6 *He mai þe vitre riwle chaungen, efter wisdom.* a. 1225 *Leg. Kath.* 485 *Ic hulle fardon þe wisdom of þeos wise worldmen.* a. 1300 *Cursor M.* 8857 *Godd ne had him sli wisdom Giuen, als he gaf salamon.* 1340-70 *Alex. & Dind.* 102 *3if god sente eury gome . . . Wordliche wisdom & wittusliche.* a. 1375 *Cato* 409 in *Minor Poems* fr. *Vernon MS.* 587 *Forþure þi wille wip wisdom.* c. 1400 *26 Pol. Poems* x. 21 *At þe tre of wysdom, folc þou souyt.* 1450-1530 *Myrr. our Lady* II. 183 *The mooste wyse wysdome of god.* 1513 *MORE Educ. V* in *Hall Chron.*, *Edu.* V (1548) 2b, *Yf grace turne hym to wisdome.* 1535 *COVERDALE Prov.* ix. 10 *The feare of the Lorde is the begynnyng of wysdome.* 1563 *Homilies, Rogation Wk.* iii. Rrrj, *Thys wisdom can not be attayned, but by the direction of the spirite of God, and therefore it is called spirituall wisdom.* 1594 *SHAKS. Rich.* III. iii. vii. 16 *Your Discipline in Warre, Wisdome in Peace.* 1597 *HOOKER Eccl. Pol. v.* lvi. §5 *That which moutheth God to worke is goodnes, and that which ordereth his worke is wisdome.* 1633 *G. HERBERT Temple, Providence* xvi. *Each creature hath a wisdom for his good.* 1640 *WILKINS Disc. New Planet* ix. 204 *Wee allow every Watch-maker so much wisdom as not to put any motion in his Instrument, which is superfluous.* 1708 *BEVERIDGE Thes. Theol.* (1711) III. 28 *By wisdom, I mean that attribute in God, whereby He orders and manages whatsoever He takes in hand, by the best means, in the best manner and to the best end.* 1784 *COWPER Task* vi. 88 *Knowledge and Wisdom, far from being one, Have oftentimes no connexion.* 1875 *MANNING Mission Holy Ghost*